



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/848,231	05/04/2001	Barry Appelman	06975-130001	6250
26171	7590	03/30/2004	EXAMINER	
FISH & RICHARDSON P.C. 1425 K STREET, N.W. 11TH FLOOR WASHINGTON, DC 20005-3500			ARSHAD, UMAR	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2174	11
DATE MAILED: 03/30/2004				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

A

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/848,231	APPELMAN, BARRY
	Examiner Umar Arshad	Art Unit 2174

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM
THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 5/4/2001.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-30 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-30 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 10.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 – 4, 6 – 9, and 11 - 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Glenn et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0021307 in view of Kudoh et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,948,058.

As per claim 1, Glenn et al. ("Glenn") teaches a communications method for transferring electronic data between users of a communications system, the method comprising:

upon opening of the electronic message by the recipient, indicating the online state of one or more of the sender and any other recipient of the electronic message (see Glenn, paragraphs 0021 and 0022).

Glenn does not teach delivering an e-mail from a sender to at least one recipient and the electronic message as an e-mail message. Kudoh et al. ("Kudoh") teaches delivering an e-mail message from a sender to at least one recipient and the electronic message as an e-mail message (see Kudoh, column 4, lines 32 - 36). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at

the time of the invention to incorporate the method of Kudoh with the method of Glenn in order to allow messages to be read hours or days after they are sent.

As per claim 2, which is dependent on claim 1, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 1 further comprising sending a message to at least one of the sender and any other recipient based on the online state (see Glenn, paragraph 0046).

As per claim 3, which is dependent on claim 2, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 2 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 2 wherein the message comprises an instant message (see Glenn, paragraph 0046).

As per claim 4, which is dependent on claim 2, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 2 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 2 wherein the message comprises an e-mail message (see Glenn, paragraph 0046).

As per claim 6, which is dependent on claim 1, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 1 wherein indicating the online state comprises displaying a graphical user interface to the recipient (see Glenn, figure 3, items 206 and 209 and paragraph 0022).

As per claim 7, which is dependent on claim 6, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 6 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 6 wherein the graphical user interface comprises an icon positioned next to an e-mail address in the e-mail message (see Glenn,

figure 3, items 206 and 209).

As per claim 8, which is dependent on claim 1, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches wherein indicating the online state comprises indicating whether the sender is online, offline, or not a member of the communications system (see Glenn, paragraph 0022).

As per claim 9, which is dependent on claim 1, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 1 wherein indicating the online state comprises accepting a request to check user online state (see Glenn, paragraph 0045, lines 10 – 15; it is inherent that the query to check user online state is accepted because a result is returned).

As per claim 11, which is dependent on claim 9, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 9 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 9 wherein the request comprises an Internet protocol (see Glenn, paragraph 0025; the examiner interprets the AOL instant messaging protocol as an internet protocol).

As per claim 12, which is dependent on claim 11, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 11 (see rejection above). Glenn discloses the method of claim 11 wherein the Internet protocol is hypertext transfer protocol (see Glenn, paragraph 0011).

As per claim 13, which is dependent on claim 9, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 9 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 9 wherein the request is initiated by a client of the user (see Glenn, paragraph 0045, lines 10 – 15).

As per claim 14, which is dependent on claim 9, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 9 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 9 further comprising sending a redirection command based on the online state (see Glenn, paragraph 0046; the examiner interprets sending the message via electronic mail instead of as an instantaneous message when the user is offline as sending a redirection command based on the online state).

As per claim 15, which is dependent on claim 9, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 9 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 14 wherein the redirection command comprises a uniform resource locator (see Glenn, paragraph 0056, lines 17 – 24).

As per claim 16, which is dependent on claim 1, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches wherein, indicating the online state comprises establishing a persistent connection to an instant messaging server (see Glenn, paragraph 0068).

As per claim 17, which is dependent on claim 1, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches wherein indicating the online state comprises checking a control port (see Glenn, paragraph 0127).

As per claim 18, it is of similar scope to claim 1 and is rejected under the same rationale as claim 1 (see rejection above).

As per claim 19, which is dependent on claim 18, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the computer program of claim 18 wherein the

computer readable medium comprises a disc (see Glenn, paragraph 0150, lines 5 – 8).

As per claim 20, which is dependent on claim 18, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the computer program of claim 18 wherein the computer readable medium comprises a client device (see Glenn, paragraph 0017).

As per claim 21, which is dependent on claim 18, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the computer program of claim 18 wherein the computer readable medium comprises a host device (see Glenn, paragraph 0153, lines 3 – 6).

As per claim 22, which is dependent on claim 18, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the computer program of claim 18 wherein the computer readable medium comprises a propagated signal (see Glenn, paragraph 0152).

As per claim 23, it is of similar scope to claim 1 and is rejected under the same rationale as claim 1 (see rejection above).

As per claim 24, it is of similar scope to claim 20 and is rejected under the same rationale as claim 20 (see rejection above).

As per claim 25, it is of similar scope to claim 21 and is rejected under the same rationale as claim 21 (see rejection above).

As per claim 26, it is of similar scope to claim 1 and is rejected under the same rationale as

claim 1 (see rejection above).

As per claim 27, it is of similar scope to claim 6 and is rejected under the same rationale as claim 6 (see rejection above).

As per claim 28, which is dependent on claim 18, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 1 (see rejection above). Glenn further teaches the method of claim 27 wherein a graphical user interface enabled for a first online state differs from a graphical user interface enabled for a second online state (see Glenn, paragraph 0022).

As per claim 29, it is of similar scope to claim 6 and is rejected under the same rationale as claim 6 (see rejection above).

As per claim 30, it is of similar scope to claim 28 and is rejected under the same rationale as claim 28 (see rejection above).

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Glenn et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0021307 in view of Kudoh et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,948,058 as applied to claim 4 above, and further in view of Bezos, U.S. Patent No. 6,525,747.

As per claim 5, which is dependent on claim 4, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 4 (see rejection above). Glenn and Kudoh do not teach the method of claim 4 wherein the e-mail message comprises an invitation to join the communications system. Bezos teaches wherein an

e-mail message comprises an invitation to join the communications system (see Bezos, column 7, lines 5 – 31). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the method of Bezos with the method of Glenn and Kudoh in order to allow the user to provide other users with access to private discussion information.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Glenn et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0021307 in view of Kudoh et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,948,058 as applied to claim 9 above, and further in view of Bunney, U.S. Patent No. 6,446,112.

As per claim 10, which is dependent on claim 9, Glenn and Kudoh teach the method of claim 9 (see rejection above). Glenn and Kudoh do not teach the method of claim 9 wherein the request comprises at least one e-mail address. Bunney et al. ("Bunney") teaches wherein a request to check user online state comprises at least one e-mail address (see Bunney, column 10, lines 1 – 9). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the method of Bunney with the method of Glenn and Kudoh in order to allow a user to link existing email addresses with internet chat handles.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Bae, U.S. Patent Application No. US 2002/0042816 teaches a method and system for

electronic mail service. Szeto et al., U.S. Patent Application No. US 2003/0140103 teaches providing instant messaging functionality in non-instant messaging environments.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Umar Arshad whose telephone number is (703) 305-0329. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 9am - 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kristine L Kincaid can be reached on (703) 308-0640. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

UA

Kristine Kincaid
KRISTINE KINCAID
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100